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STATE OF NEVADA

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

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<http://water.nv.gov>

June 14, 2018

Re: Public Workshop Regarding Existing Water Right Use and Groundwater Pumping in the Lower White River Flow System

Dear Water Right Holder:

Please take notice that the Nevada State Engineer has set an initial Public Workshop for **July 24, 2018, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Moapa Valley Community Center, 320 N. Moapa Valley Blvd., Overton, Nevada.** The purpose of this Public Workshop is to provide an overview of the status of groundwater use and recovery following the conclusion of the State Engineer Order 1169 aquifer pumping test, to address the feasibility of developing appropriated groundwater rights both within the carbonate and alluvial aquifers within the *Lower White River Flow System* (LWRFS) (as depicted on the enclosed map), and to take public comment on proposed management options. The records of the Nevada State Engineer show that you are the holder of one or more groundwater rights within the *LWRFS*.

The State Engineer issued Order 1169 on March 8, 2002, holding in abeyance carbonate-rock aquifer system groundwater applications pending or to be filed in Coyote Spring Valley (Basin 210), Black Mountains Area (Basin 215), Garnet Valley (Basin 216), Hidden Valley (Basin 217), Muddy River Springs Area (a.k.a. Upper Moapa Valley; Basin 219), and Lower Moapa Valley (Basin 220). The California Wash (Basin 218) was added to the Order 1169 basins on April 18, 2002. The purpose of Order 1169 was to allow for a carbonate aquifer pumping test for further study of the carbonate-rock aquifer system, which was not well understood. The State Engineer wished to determine whether additional (new) appropriations could be developed from the carbonate-rock aquifer system.

The Order 1169 aquifer pumping test began on November 15, 2010, and was declared complete through the issuance of Order 1169A on December 21, 2012. Following the

conclusion of the aquifer pumping test, pumping test participants and other interested parties submitted reports to the State Engineer addressing the information gained from the test.

During the Order 1169 aquifer pumping test, an average of 5,300 acre-feet per year of permitted rights was pumped from carbonate wells in Coyote Spring Valley with a cumulative total of approximately 10,200 acre-feet per year of water was pumped from the carbonate aquifer within the *LWRFS*. The results of the 2-year test demonstrate that pumping from the *LWRFS* aquifer caused unprecedented declines in groundwater levels and flows in the Petersen and Peterson East springs, two high-altitude springs that are considered to be the early warning indicator springs for the overall condition of the Muddy River. These springs are at the headwaters of the Muddy River, which serves as the primary water source for the decreed senior water rights of the fully appropriated Muddy River. Additionally, these same springs are a critical part of the source of water that supplies the habitat of the endangered Moapa Dace, a fish federally listed as an endangered species since 1967. Based upon these findings, on January 29, 2014, the State Engineer issued Rulings 6254, 6255, 6256, 6257, 6259, 6260, and 6258 denying pending applications in Coyote Spring Valley, Garnet Valley, Hidden Valley, Muddy River Springs Area, Black Mountains Area, and California Wash.

Based upon model results and observations made during the carbonate aquifer pumping test, it is asserted by some study participants that pumping at the Order 1169 rate could result in both of the high-altitude springs going dry in 3 years or less. In the five years since completion of the aquifer pumping test, monitoring of pumpage and water levels has continued and the additional data is providing the State Engineer a better understanding of the amount of groundwater pumping that may be sustainable in the *LWRFS*. Since completion of the aquifer pumping test, groundwater levels and spring flows have remained relatively flat while precipitation has been about average and carbonate pumping has averaged 7,300 afa.

There exists over 50,000 acre-feet of groundwater appropriations in the *LWRFS* dating as far back as 1919. Pumping 10,200 afa of these rights from carbonate wells during the Order 1169 pumping test yielded an unacceptable loss in spring flow and aquifer storage within the *LWRFS*. Carbonate aquifer pumping effects to spring flow coupled with alluvial aquifer pumping impacts on Muddy River flows may directly affect senior decreed rights. This leads the State Engineer to believe that only a small portion of the permitted water rights in the *LWRFS* may be fully developed without negatively affecting the endangered Moapa Dace and its habitat or the senior decreed rights on the Muddy River.

The purpose of the Public Workshop is to apprise the water right holders and other stakeholders in the *LWRFS* of the serious concerns related to the anticipated effects of full development of existing rights in the basins. The Public Workshop will also provide water right holders an update on the current status of the water resources in the *LWRFS* in the five years since the completion of the aquifer pumping test, address concerns relating to the location and effects of groundwater pumping, and the opportunity to comment on how best to proceed in developing the water resources in the *LWRFS*. As the driest state in the nation, the Nevada State

Notice of Public Workshop

June 14, 2018

Page 3

Engineer has the responsibility to conserve, protect, manage, and enhance the State's water resources for all Nevada citizens.

In advance of the Public Workshop, Orders 1169 and 1169A, and Rulings 6254, 6255, 6256, 6257, 6259, 6260, and 6258 may be accessed from the Division of Water Resources website at <http://water.nv.gov> under the "hearings" tab, then searching within the "Rulings" and "Orders" tabs. Further, a copy of the planned presentation for the Public Workshop will be made available on the Nevada Division of Water Resources' website at <http://water.nv.gov> under the "Recent News" column, no later than **July 17, 2018**. If you do not have internet access and would like a copy of the rulings, orders, or proposed presentation, please contact the Division of Water Resources at (775) 684-2800.

We are pleased to make reasonable accommodations for members of the public who are disabled and wish to attend the Public Workshop. If special arrangements for the Public Workshop are required, please notify the Division at the above address or phone number at least five working days before the Workshop. You may also contact the Division if you have questions concerning the Public Workshop scheduled in this matter.

Sincerely,



Micheline N. Fairbank
Deputy Administrator

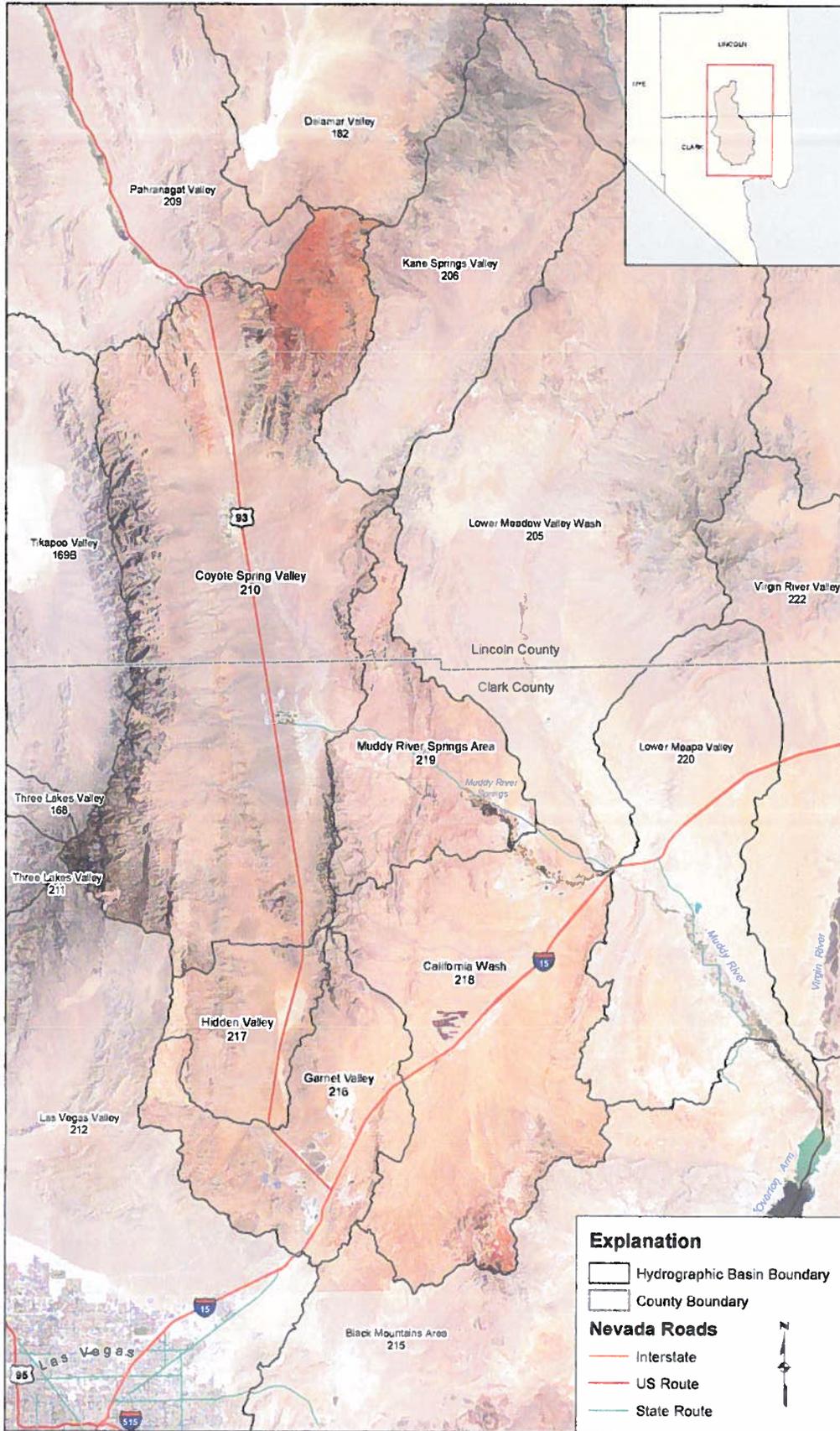
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Enclosure

cc: Bradley Crowell, Director, Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
(via e-mail)
Dominique Etchegoyhen, Deputy Director, Nevada Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources (via e-mail)
Jim Lawrence, Deputy Director, Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural
Resources (via e-mail)
Clark County Commission
Lincoln County Commission

LOWER WHITE RIVER FLOW SYSTEM

Coyote Spring Valley, Muddy River Springs Area, Hidden Valley, Garnet Valley, California Wash, and a portion of Black Mountains Area



June 2018

0 5 10 20 Miles

Nevada Division of Water Resources
Office of the State Engineer

Summer 2017 imagery from the
National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP)

Jason King, P.E.
State Engineer